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ABSTRACT

This guide of the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) is meant for the tutor who is engaged in adult education. The first area discussed is the necessity for the tutor to get to know the students, and ways in which this can be accomplished are suggested. The students' motives for attending the class and for learning are to be viewed from the standpoint of the purpose of the class, which is defined as student-learning. The importance of the first meeting of a class is pointed out, and good first meetings are said to be those that arouse students' interest and immediately involve them in the learning process, as well as give them the opportunity of easily recognizable achievement. An example is given of a way in which a tutor in local history can devise an activity that involves student participation. The tutor is advised that he must be constantly aware that his task is to help people both to understand things and to pass judgement on them. It is stated that often the tutor must not act as a lecturer, but rather as an animateur, enabler, and initiator. The syllabus should be constructed in view of what the real needs of the class are. Written work of the students is seen as an aid to learning. Other aids are reading books and maintaining scrapbooks. Tutor managed aids are visual aids, such as slides, films, and audiovisual aids. (DB)

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THE TUT A CLASS

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The Tutor and the WEA Class

The WEA expects its tutors to engage in liberal adult education. It is possible to argue at great length about the meanings of the three terms in this expression, but for present purposes it is sufficient to note that the liberal demands freedom to act in accordance with relevant evidence, that adulthood is the stage of life at which a citizen enjoys authority and assumes responsibility more fully than at any other, and that education causes people to change.

KNOWING THE STUDENTS

The WEA maintains its special concern for people whose formal education has been minimal, but it believes that anyone willing to profit from its classes should be allowed to do so. It is unselective in its recruitment. It knows from long experience that many people who might have been thought, or who might have thought themselves, unlikely to benefit from its provision have in the end proved admirable students. It also knows that the more education people have had, the more they seem to want, and that educationally sophisticated people will take advantage of whatever agencies they find catering for their interests. Should anyone turn to the WEA, he will be welcomed, provided that he is willing to satisfy the demands the Association makes of its students. The overriding justification of this lack of selection is the encouragement offered to people of limited education, those in greatest need of sympathetic provision; but there is a price to be paid, and this is charged to the tutor.

The WEA says to each of its tutors, 'Here is a group of people about whom we can guarantee only one thing, they are willing to begin a course in your subject. Take them as they are and retain them throughout the course, by the end of which you should have helped them towards significantly greater understanding of the matters you have dealt with.' The instruction to take the people as they are lays a considerable burden on the tutor. He must discover what sort of people they are 'as they are'. He is to help them to increased understanding, so he must find out what is their present understanding, and to what ways of increasing this they are

likely to be susceptible. This can rarely be done either before a class begins or by direct questioning. In any case, both of these courses have strong suggestions of the selective, which will have been avoided in recruitment. For the most part, the tutor must get to know his students during the conduct of the class.

It is well known that class meetings are often prefaced by conversations between the tutor and early arrivals, and that they often have an epilogue in the form of conversations between the tutor and students who stay behind after the formal conclusion of the evening; but such features are not always present at the beginning of a course, and sometimes they never become firmly established, hence they cannot be the prime source of a tutor's familiarity with his students. Further, although enthusiastic tutors, voluntary workers and other dedicated persons are apt to overlook the fact, it remains true that no student can be required to take part in these extra-class activities, and that some, who would like to do so, are not able.

Getting to know the students during the conduct of the class requires the tutor to be both aware and patient. Most students will reveal themselves, provided they are given the opportunity. The comments and the silences that indicate their understanding and their difficulties, their reluctance and their agressiveness, are easily noted by anyone who wants to notice and to cope with such things. Tutors are too often guilty of either not giving students ample opportunity of revealing themselves during the class, or assuming that revelation is complete for the whole class, or for a particular student, at a certain point. Conducting a WEA class calls for the constant rematching of method to increasingly fuller awareness of students. Each student attends the class for what it offers him, not for what it may offer to some inadequate or mistaken idea of him.

Many people have pointed out the value of getting to know students individually and privately and thus fostering the confidence that encourages them to disclose important relevant matters about themselves that they would not care to reveal in public. This practice has its place, but, even when it is possible, it takes time. Class meetings offer immediate evidence about students, and many things that would take a long time to discover from direct individual contact (if they could be so discovered at all) may be quickly revealed in the group situation.

MOTIVES FOR ATTENDING AND MOTIVES FOR LEARNING

Students will remain members of a class as long as by so doing they are satisfying themselves in some way. The question is often put, 'Are they getting what they came for?' and this inevitably leads to, 'Why have they come?' The imputation of motives to people is a notoriously dangerous practice, and too often the level at which motive is being considered is not made clear. All levels of motivation are not relevant in all circumstances. It may be that, in spite of what a certain student, or that student's tutor, takes to be his motive for attending a class, a psychiatrist would claim that the motive was something like an unconscious desire to expiate for some crime embedded in racial memory, and, given the circumstances of psychiatry, perhaps this could be so. But psychiatry and WEA classes are not the same thing – although hard-pressed tutors may from time to time suspect that they are. The assumed motive for a person's becoming a member of a WEA class is that he wants to profit from it educationally, and it is a fair guess that such a motive is always present in some degree and at some level. Nevertheless, for the individual student a more important motive may be just to get out, to get away from the family for an hour or two, or any of a number of more extravagant but equally compelling reasons. This kind of motive will be an adequate answer to the question 'Why does he come?' only if by 'come' one merely means 'attend'.

A more important question for the tutor is 'Why ought he to come?' and the answer to this must be 'In order to learn.' The people who come already motivated to learn are self-evidently no problem in this respect. Those who do not must acquire a motive for learning, and this they will usually do once they have achieved something. Their motive will arise from such things as the desire for further satisfaction from accomplishments of a kind of which they did not know they were capable, the desire for the greater satisfaction that arises from obviously increasing intellectual authority, and so on.

It should be noted that a person's original motive for attending may continue to be satisfied throughout a course. Such a motive is not necessarily incompatible with a worthy motive for learning – one can *both* avoid mother-in-law on her weekly visit or the kids and their weekly record rave *and* learn effectively. On the other hand, the satisfaction of

the motive for learning may cause the original motive for attending to become irrelevant. The essential point is that the purpose of the class is student-learning, and it cannot be properly justified merely by its satisfaction of motives for attending. It is not sufficient that students should be satisfied by a class. They must be satisfied in a particular way. A WEA class does not exist to keep its students happy by no matter what means, and tutors should not fall into the error of trying to justify their classes on the grounds that they are valuable therapeutic groups or interesting social gatherings. The WEA has no contempt of therapy or of social activity; but it does not establish classes for these purposes. Further, it expects students' learning to be progressive. It does not arrange classes so that people can enjoy the sustained repetition of their achievements. To use an analogy from a craft subject, classes are not established so that at the end of them people who could already successfully make a certain kind of pot will have made a great number of such pots, but so that people, whatever their initial skill, will have become able to make better pots.

BEGINNING EFFECTIVELY

The first meeting of any class is a most important one. Usually such meetings are either good or bad, rarely mediocre. The bad first meetings are those at which the tutor talks about what the class is going to do, frequently also discoursing on how it is going to do it. A great deal of the what and how will be determined by the nature of the students, and the tutor is not yet in a position to know this in any significant degree. The students, or many of them, may be quite unfamiliar with the subject of the course, and to tell them that the class will first deal with one unfamiliar thing and then pass on to further unfamiliar things will hardly hearten them. Even greater discouragement is likely to arise if it is clear that some members of the class are by no means unfamiliar with the matters to be dealt with. In such a case, elaborate verbal assurances that inexperienced students will be able to accomplish all that is required of them, since so many have done so in the past, have little helpful effect. They tend to sound like sales talk.

The good first meetings arouse students' interest and inspire them with confidence by immediately involving them in the learning process and

giving them the opportunity of easily recognisable achievement. These meetings are based on the class at work, not on talk about what the tutor supposes the class will do, and they need careful preparation.

To reassure students of their capabilities, the tutor must devise some task that will both fall within the students' competence and yet be relevant to the course. This is much easier in some areas of adult education than in others (much easier in craft subjects, the WEA tutor is likely to lament), but it would seem quite possible in all. A good example, which is worth considering as a model when trying to devise such tasks, is afforded by the practice of a tutor in local history. One aim of the good tutor is to place his students in as close contact with authoritative evidence as he is able. It is the bad tutor who always stands between his students and the evidence. In local history one needs to be able to read old documents, and this calls for some skill in palaeography. It does not take long to give people a workable, if very limited, idea of some form of palaeography. This done, the tutor supplies each member of his class with a photocopy of an extract from an original document with the invitation to take it home, decipher it and contribute the result to the next class meeting. He finds that there are few students who do not complete the task with satisfaction. Naturally, the extract is chosen with great concern for its palaeographic difficulty and for the interest and value of its contents to a beginner in local history.

This task involves the students in activity, and psychologists assure us (although experienced tutors hardly needed their support) that activity enhances learning. Further, the task involves the students in activity within their competence and so leads to achievement, a very necessary factor in learning. The activity is not expended on some exercise devised to demonstrate in general terms that achievement is possible. It is addressed to an achievement that is necessary to further the learning that the tutor hopes to promote. It brings students into immediate contact with authoritative material, and it establishes students' expectations of continued effort and achievement on their part, which, in turn, lay a burden of careful preparation on the tutor.

UNDERSTANDING AND JUDGEMENT

In his preparation, whether of the first meeting or of any other part of the course, the tutor must remain constantly aware that his task is to help people both to understand things and to pass judgement on them. But before anyone can understand what a thing means, he must first know what it is. Before he can comprehend it, he must apprehend it. Much time needs to be spent in ensuring that students are capable of taking a coherent view of the matters they are concerned with. Especially with older students, much patience is called for in encouraging them to adopt terms of reference other than those to which they have become accustomed. A common way of looking at a play is from a point of view derived from Ibsenish naturalism. If such a viewpoint is used for looking at a Ionesco play, the play will just not be seen. Indeed, what is seen will be condemned as not being a play at all, in the way that abstract pictures are said not to be pictures at all by those who can see only from the viewpoint of the representational. And it should be remembered that it is not only the newer things that raise viewpoint problems. These problems arise from the unfamiliar, which may be old (e.g. medieval painting) or may be the product of a different culture (e.g. modern Asian music). Art provides useful concrete examples, but all fields, notably those of morals and politics, have their full share of viewpoint problems.

Tutors have to help students to realise that things can be looked at in many ways and these ways of looking, these frameworks against which the things are seen, make the things either more or less meaningful, or meaningful in different ways. In looking at a Mondrian differently from the way one looks at a Rembrandt one is not making a lavish concession to the modern painter any more than one would be making a lavish concession to Chaucer by learning Middle English, and one is not implying any kind of value judgement. The judgement will be made on what one has gained access to. Of course, the judgement may well entail the view that the value of the matter in question is no adequate reward for the effort needed to gain access to it. This is a different issue. Until one knows the object of attention, no judgement can be passed on it. In his early stages, a student will usually be happy in the knowledge that what he is asked to deal with is what is considered by most people, or by those who are taken to have

expertise, to be worthwhile. He will try to come to terms with things merely because most people, or the experts, consider them worthwhile. This does not mean that the coming to terms must result in the endorsement of the common or the expert assessment.

Although the tutor has to give a great deal of help to students as they try to achieve coherent and rewarding views of things, he must remain aware that they can sometimes help each other or even help him, and he must give them the opportunity of offering this help. There must be occasions on which instead of saying, 'This is the way to look at this,' or of saying, 'If you look at this in such a way you see so and so, whereas if you look at it in some other way you see such and such,' he says, 'There it is. Now, what do you make of it?' Often, the best way of looking at the matter, which the tutor might have been tempted to announce *ex cathedra*, will emerge from the students' observations. Their conviction of the worth of the viewpoint they have arrived at will be strong because *they* have arrived at it. They will have practised what is nowadays called the discovery method of learning. On rare occasions, the students will discover a more effective viewpoint than any the tutor had to offer, and it is even possible that they will discover a more effective viewpoint than anyone at all has previously suggested. It has been said that the facts talked to Darwin because he listened to them. Tutors must encourage students to listen to the facts and must give them the opportunity to listen to the facts without an obbligato accompaniment from the tutorial voice. Students in WEA classes should, above all, be learning about politics or philosopy or literature or the like. They should only be learning about the tutor incidentally.

When students understand a matter, they must be encouraged to pass judgement on it. To help them to do this effectively, they must be made aware of the standards according to which any judgement they come to has been made. They must be helped to realise to what degree their judgements are authoritative, to become aware of what firm knowledge and sound experience they have to support their views. Often they will judge on the basis of views expressed by experts, on the basis of information they take on trust. There is nothing wrong in this. We all do it. Nevertheless, students have got to realise the responsibility that goes with judgement, however founded; for if the responsibility is shrugged off,

the judgement is not worth making.

In making judgements, students must be unhampered by the tutor. To indicate to them such things as the inconsistency between a particular judgement and the facts is not only the tutor's privilege, but also his duty; but the making of a judgement must be the student's own. Classes are to help people to learn how to make judgements, not to get people to subscribe to judgements acceptable to the tutor or to the WEA. The WEA does not take the view that the full cost of non-vocational adult education should be borne by those who take advantage of it; but it does not require that when the issue is brought up in a class the tutor should ensure that all the students come to hold this view just because it is the WEA's view. The WEA arrived at its view by a scrupulous examination of the facts and their implications and believes that most people who make a similar examination will arrive at the same view. It is this scrupulous examination that matters; and, even if after such an examination there are people who take a different view, the WEA is not alarmed, provided that such a view is in accordance with the facts. The WEA has always been at pains to help people to make responsible judgements. It has never deluded itself that all responsible judgements on an issue will necessarily be identical. Responsibility does not inevitably lead to conformity.

HELPING BY HOLDING BACK

The plea to give the students a chance in the conduct of the class has to be renewed when one turns to another customary class activity, discussion; and at this point it may be worthwhile to suggest an answer to the question, 'Why do tutors tend to talk too much?' Most tutors do talk too much, and most tutors feel guilty about this. They tend to assume that they must have strong undesirable characteristics, that they must be essentially of the dominating type, or that they are too self-assured – that is, that they believe that they are aware of and can deal with all the problems that the students can possibly have, without the students having to make these explicit.

The rigours of selection for WEA teaching have never been comparable to the rigours of selection for the calendar of saints. No doubt there are dominating tutors and self-assured tutors; but these are surely few. The

over-voluble and over-interfering tutors are almost without exception over-anxious. They want to help their students in every possible way. They would be mortified if it could ever be said that they had not pulled their weight on some occasion, however slight. Their over-anxiety leads to compulsive activity; but activity on the tutor's part frequently impairs learning on the part of the students.

One cannot deal with the problems troubling students unless one knows what these problems are. Guesses are invitations to disaster. The students must be allowed to reveal their problems. It is dangerously easy to conduct a class session during which one successfully provides answers to problems the students do not have, whilst leaving their real problems untouched. It is said that on seeing a boy walking around with his hands in his trouser pockets, a headmaster gave him a cogent address on self-respect and the like. On insisting that, without reply, the boy at once took his hands from his pockets, the headmaster was able to gaze at a pair of trousers falling to the floor. It is not uncommon for a tutor to give a spirited address on *esprit de corps* when what his students urgently need is a bit of string or a safety pin. Recently the present writer was embarrassed when after talking about an aspect of communication (simply and thoroughly, as he thought) a student said to him, 'You talked about the overt conduct of audiences.' It seemed as though an interesting observation or worthwhile objection was going to be brought out. The next sentence was, 'What does overt mean?'

Very often the tutor must act not as lecturer, but as animateur, enabler, initiator. He must be prepared to service the class as it learns by doing, by attempting to find out what things are, by attempting to solve problems. He must be content to act as linesman, only interfering when the class is departing from its purpose. He must be the holder of the tapes, not of the whip. He must be prepared to let the students have a go, and must realise that just as there is little point in a craft teacher pushing a student aside, taking his tools and setting to work himself with the comment, 'This is how it should be done,' so there is little point in a tutor intervening in a discussion just because he can make a quicker and neater job of the point at issue than his students can.

THE SYLLABUS

If the students play so great a part in the shaping of a class, what is the point of the syllabus which tutors are asked to prepare before a class has come into being? The syllabus has two stages. First, there is the document used in recruiting. This is very much a statement of intentions from the tutor, based on such relevant information as he has been able to gather – for example, the origin of the idea for the class, details about any people who have said they fully intend to join the class, the locality proposed for the class, etc. The tutor sets down what seems to be reasonable to him, given such information. After having got to know the students who have actually been recruited, the tutor can then construct the final syllabus. He may find that the demands that he thought the students might fulfil need to be eased or, and this is not uncommon, need to be toughened. He may find that the matters he felt the course should deal with have to be somewhat amended. He should make any necessary alterations in full awareness of the fact that the course, however different from his original proposal, must remain effective liberal adult education. Further, he must remember that he will go on learning about his students throughout the course, and unforeseen adjustments, though usually not of a major kind, will probably be necessary from time to time. This means that a syllabus can never be a detailed document prearranging every feature of a class. The tutor who painstakingly drafts a syllabus that sets down what is to happen in every meeting is usually the victim of his own good intentions, the over-anxious tutor who has already been mentioned as over-active during class meetings. It takes a great deal of self-possession to abandon the details of a carefully constructed syllabus in view of what one discovers to be the real needs of a class, for this requires a tutor to admit that his original ideas were mistaken. The tendency is for a tutor to try to conduct a class in such a way as to justify his syllabus; but the purpose of the class is to cater for the students, not to flatter the tutor's detailed expectations.

AIDS TO LEARNING – STUDENT MANAGED

The need to know where students are at the beginning of a class, to know where they are at all the stages of the class and to be aware of the directions in which they are heading has already been much emphasised.

It is doubtful whether this need can be over-emphasised. So far, conduct during the class meetings and in conversation before and after the meetings has been noted as a means of getting to know students. Another very important means is work done outside the class by students. At once, one recollects the plaintive cries of students, 'Do we have to write essays?' and the desperate appeals of tutors, 'How do you get them to write essays?' To these questions from the heart one can only reply with further questions. Why should anyone who is incapable of writing an essay be required to write an essay? What is the reason for requiring an essay even from someone capable of writing an essay? Essay is a debased word to the extent that it is used to give inflated importance to almost any piece of writing. Given its honourable meaning, it implies demanding formal effort of a kind that few tutors, let alone students, find inviting.

If students can be encouraged to write about matters relevant to the class, advantages will accrue both to them and to the tutor. Written work is evidence of what a student can do without the assistance of the group. It is also evidence of what he cannot do, of the matters on which he needs help. In discussion, a student may well contribute a valuable modification of an important point raised by someone else. Private written work will show whether or not he is capable of raising such important points himself, whether or not he is merely capable of dealing with matters first raised by others. Again, it is not always the least voluble in discussion who are learning least. Private written work can be valuable evidence of this.

Written work encourages a sense of commitment and responsibility. In discussion it is not difficult to modify or excuse statements one has made. The written word restricts one to precisely what one has written. It makes one try to formulate and express ideas in a way that only knaves or fools could misinterpret.

Written work can be a wholly private matter between the student and the tutor if the student so wishes.

It used to be claimed that written work had an important remedial value for horny handed sons of toil who had forgotten, or who had perhaps hardly learned, how to write. It retains an element of remedial value even today; but the remedy must be administered with care, and the disease to which it is applied is rarely mortal. No tutor should point out to a student that there are two r's and two s's in embarrassment, or that the e comes

before the i in receive, unless he knows the student well enough to be sure that he would be pleased to have such comments. Writing that 'The followers of Marx was . . .' or that 'Beethoven's father were . . .' does not denote the worst kind of ignorance. What is important is the sense and relevance of what is claimed about Marx's followers or Beethoven's father. In concentrating on what is conveyed by what a student has written, the tutor will find ample opportunity to help with grammar, syntax, style and the like, to the degree that is proper at any given stage. Few people understand and even less relish grammar as such. Language is a tool, and it is better to encourage a student to make something in language and then, if necessary, to point out that its deficiencies are due to his not using the tool properly, than to insist that unless he first achieves proficiency in tool-drill he can never attempt to make anything.

A common claim these days is that we are all highly literate, that some students are graduates or from colleges of education and the like, and that people of this kind cannot be asked to do written work since their academic or professional training is a guarantee of their writing ability. First, anyone who is familiar with people who have had academic or professional training knows that it cannot be assumed that such people write well in the sense of grammar, style and so on. Second, a student, graduate or otherwise, attends a class in order to learn, or to learn more, about whatever is being dealt with, and it has been shown that written work is an important means of such learning. The truth would seem to be that graduates and the like are fully aware of the committed nature of written work and realise that if it is undertaken lightly it readily betrays lack of serious intention. The alternatives are either to do it or not to do it. Not to do it requires some justification, and this takes the form of the claim that it is not necessary. The claim, then, is that there are ways of learning necessary for other adults but unnecessary for graduates, which is just not true.

The ways in which students are encouraged to do written work and the extent of particular pieces of work will, of course, vary with the natures and aptitudes of the students. Problem-solving can often provide a useful starting point. Each member of the class is invited to write a solution to some issue that has arisen. The kinds of result that the tutor gets will give him the information that he needs to plan further written work.

Sometimes it will be appropriate to ask all of the students to write on the same topic. Sometimes it will be appropriate to encourage individuals to write about matters that particularly interest them, or of which they have special knowledge or experience.

Students will not do written work unless they believe that they are going to profit from it. They will not continue to do it unless they find that they do profit from it. This means that written work must be carefully adjusted to students' needs and abilities and must be scrupulously treated by the tutor. Written work must be carefully read and commented on, and there must be full encouragement for students to take up with the tutor any comments he has made. The writing may be quite a task for the student. Reading what has been written is always a demanding task for the tutor. If some tutors were to put the energy they mistakenly expend in interfering with the learning process during class meetings, or the diligence they show in drafting detailed and restrictive syllabuses, into dealing with students' written work, learning in WEA classes would be considerably enhanced.

Writing is an aid to learning; but there are many other aids available to the WEA tutor and his class. Some are for the students' immediate use, some are managed for the students by the tutor.

Of the aids for students' immediate use, reading is the most obvious. Students need advice on reading, and the ability to provide this advice lays a further burden on the tutor. First, he must remember that it is more than likely that he will be much more familiar than his students with the world of relevant books and literature. Not everyone is used to consulting bibliographies and publishers' catalogues. It cannot be assumed that students will know the various paperback houses, be aware of what is stocked by local booksellers, be used to calling on the services of the local library. In recommending reading, apart from adjusting the intellectual demands to the needs of the student, the tutor must make sure that what he is recommending is available. That a book ought to be in the public library is no guarantee that it will be. That a book is in print is no guarantee that locally it will be in stock. No book that is too expensive for student purchase and of which the local library has only one copy should be required for class reading at a particular point during the course. If books can be provided for the exclusive use of the class, the tutor's task is eased;

but, again, care is needed in making sure that the books provided are only those that will be of use. The number of books made available is not in itself a useful criterion. The number of relevant books made available is what matters. A word with or a letter to the local public librarian or to local bookshops, an enquiry into the WEA's own functions as a bookseller, will usually bring valuable advice and not infrequently offers of generous help.

Tutors should prescribe minimum reading. Optional or further reading can best be discussed privately with those students who are in a position to undertake it. Obviously, students can only be *required* to do *required* reading. Such reading should guarantee their being able to derive adequate profit from the class. Those who, from lack of opportunity, can do no more than is required must not be made to feel that they are at a serious disadvantage in comparison with the more leisured.

Recommendations for reading appear in syllabuses, and syllabuses are sometimes mistakenly assumed to be more thorough or less thorough because of the number of titles listed; but in some subjects, literature, for example, reading may need to be more extensive than in others. In any case, the reading is to facilitate learning, and if part of a book is all that is really necessary, this should be made clear. If a pamphlet or an article will make an adequate contribution to a student's understanding, nothing is gained by recommending a book.

A learning aid that is not unrelated to reading is the scrapbook. It is often very worthwhile to encourage students to keep a scrapbook of cuttings about matters relevant to a course. In newspapers and periodicals, in pamphlets issued by trade houses, in children's magazines, there are such things as graphs of trade figures, clear accounts of scientific principles and of recent inventions, articles on the arts – something on almost everything. Students who collect such cuttings are actively engaged in teaching themselves, often produce scrapbooks that are of lasting value, and almost always share their findings with their fellow students. A looseleaf scrapbook whose accumulating contents can be rearranged is a most valuable aid to learning. Students have been known to learn a great deal about and to produce notable collections of information on such matters as contemporary morality, the Common Market, the state and the arts, from no wider a range of sources than their customary daily, evening and weekly

newspapers, *Radio Times* and children's magazines such as *Look and Learn*.

AIDS TO LEARNING – TUTOR MANAGED

Common aids to learning managed by the tutor include visual aids such as slides, loops and silent films, audio aids such as tapes and records, and audiovisual aids such as sound films and slides married to tapes. To these, EVR will no doubt soon be added. In general, only two points need to be made about tutor managed aids. First, the aid must not be allowed to obtrude itself in its own right. It is an aid, and what matters is the help it gives in learning. To the extent that students are conscious of the machine, because of its mechanical deficiencies, its inexpert use or its attraction as a modern marvel, the intended aid will be distracting their attention from what it should be conveying. Second, the material to be used in the machine must be carefully prepared in advance. It is unfair to students to risk using a film or slides or a tape or a record that has not already been seen or listened to by the tutor – for example, a film ordered on the basis of a catalogue description, a record suggested by a colleague. Any such item may turn out to be something of a disappointment or even a complete waste of time. Previous examination will obviate complete disasters, and sometimes it is possible to remove or skip unsuitable parts of tapes and records and sets of slides, thereby deriving a useful aid from something unsuitable in its original form.

The number of ways in which a tutor uses these aids effectively depends on his familiarity with the potentialities of the machines. Too many tutors are unaware, for example, that some film projectors are capable of being stopped to show any frame as a still, that some have microphone attachments that permit the tutor to furnish a commentary rather than be content with whatever sound track is on the film. A lively curiosity about what machines can do is usually profitable in terms of enhanced teaching. Naturally, the machines have got to be available before the tutor can use them. There is no point in using an aid merely because one has access to it; but, equally, there is no point in refusing to consider whether the aids available at some premises – well equipped schools, for example – could play a useful part in one's work.

Aids increase in price and sophistication, and some tutors will find that

they have access to overhead projectors or even to closed circuit television. These machines are still subject to the two considerations mentioned above.

After having climbed the heights of cost and complexity, it is well to remember that the blackboard remains one of the most effective of all aids, and it is an aid that can readily serve the needs of students as these arise. The blackboard has no machinery to go wrong, does not place the tutor in a position of responsibility with respect to a costly piece of apparatus, does not require him to use material over which he has not complete control, does not require lighting by which students find it difficult to make or consult notes, and is so simple and familiar that the distraction of novelty or complexity does not occur.

SOME OTHER AIDS TO LEARNING

Finally, it is worth noting that aids managed by neither students nor tutor (radio and television transmissions, commercially shown films) may be very useful if they offer retransmissions or further showings of material known to the tutor as worthwhile. When they offer first transmissions or first showings, they present something of a problem – exactly what are they going to present, and how? Although tutors may not be able to preview, they can often take useful decisions on the basis of the advance information, frequently available at an early date, and sometimes of a very detailed kind, issued by the BBC, the ITA and many film companies.

In conclusion, let us turn again to the students, in terms of whose profit teaching aids, and everything else connected with the class, ought to be justified.

Students must be brought to and sustained in the position in which they are in effect saying, 'I have carefully considered the matter in hand in the light of reason and experience, and I have arrived at a conclusion that I shall hold until such time as further reason or experience causes me to discard it.' They must also be made aware that the results of the further reason and experience that any good class constantly offers to students, can never be fully anticipated. There is always a risk in exploration, and all classes are in one sense exploratory: also, change in degree

may result in change in state. If water is heated constantly, its temperature will rise from four degrees centigrade to fourteen degrees, to twenty-four, and so on up to ninety-four; but it will not go on rising from ninety-four to one hundred and four. At a hundred degrees there will be a change in state. The water will become steam. Similar changes occur when people apply themselves to understanding – and people do not all have the same boiling point. Both tutor and students must be prepared to face the consequences. The student with enthusiasm for romantic art may well be at least jolted when he finds that some great romantic artists were contemptible when one considers their social or personal qualities, and one needs little imagination to foresee similar shocks awaiting students of many subjects. Students cannot be protected from the facts. Indeed, classes seek to expose them to the facts. The risk is not a foolish one, but a necessary one, and most students and tutors come to recognise that this risk is not without its exhilaration.

The term 'students' has been used throughout to indicate the people with whom the tutor is expected to deal. This has merely been a shorthand convenience, for, in the early stages of a class, many or even all of those who attend will not be students in the sense of people fitted to study. One does not already have to be a student in this sense in order to be acceptable to the WEA. Those who attend classes have to become such students, and tutors are responsible for ensuring that their 'students' become students.

Perhaps what has been written has given the impression that one only needs to do this or that in order to ensure success in a certain particular with a WEA class. In fact, each of the suggestions, and indeed any suggestion that is ever made, must be considered by each tutor in the light of his subject, his actual students and his own personality. Some suggestions he will no doubt find well worth his while adopting or adapting, some less so. He must try the suggestions and draw his own conclusions with reference to his own needs. He will sometimes discover that a particular course of action is of no use to him, sometimes that the course of action would be of value if he were to perfect himself in it. At least an attempt has been made here to give tutors some suggestions rather than to leave them to attempt a difficult task with no guidance at all.

In the end, any tutor must be judged by the effect he has on his

students. If he is helping them to realise their potentialities, to become themselves, he is being fair to the liberal. If he is helping them to acknowledge and to profit from their actual experience and their status, he is being fair to the adult. If he is helping them to change as persons, he is being fair to education.

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